

responsibility for the welfare of all of our children, doing that together.

No one is too young to be told that the decision to bring a child into the world is the gravest choice they will ever make. No one is too young to be told that there are consequences to decisions and that one way or the other, people always wind up being held accountable.

The basic bargain of our country should be, however, that if you are responsible, there will be opportunity for you. You will be party of a community of people who care about you, who believe that we must go forward together.

Pearl Buck once said, "If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all." For too many children every year, the American way of life fails the child, and one of the ways we see it most gravely is in the epidemic of teen pregnancy. We now have people all over America that are working to turn it around. We have a national campaign committed to it. And we will do everything we can to support all of you good people who are trying to make this country a better place for these two young people on this stage and all the young people in America they represent.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Blessing Tate and Salvador Ayala, teen pregnancy program representatives, and Michael A. Carrera, director, National Training Center, Children's Aid Society; Rebecca Maynard, editor of "Kids Having Kids"; Isabel Sawhill, president, National Campaign to Reduce Teen Pregnancy; former Gov. Tom Kean of New Jersey; and Paul Tudor Jones II, chair, the Robin Hood Foundation.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Robinson

June 13, 1996

Ladies and gentlemen, President Robinson, Mr. Robinson, members of the Irish delegation, Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, distinguished guests. Welcome to the largest gathering of Irish-Americans since the last Notre Dame football game. *[Laughter]*

Hillary and I were hoping that we might with this wonderful dinner tonight in some

small way repay President Robinson and the people of Ireland for the wonderful reception that we and our American delegation received there late last year. It was, I think it's fair to say, two of the most extraordinary days in the lives of all of us who went. And we hope now to give a similar honor to the extraordinary President of Ireland.

From the beginning of her career in public life—and she was elected to the Seanad at the age of 25—Mary Robinson has stood unfailing for those on the margins of society, for those without a voice in public affairs, for those most in need, for the rights of women and the care of the children at home and around the world. She said, "You have a voice; I will make it heard." And she has. And Ireland has heeded her strong and compassionate call. And indeed the entire world has applauded her leadership.

We are truly glad you are here, Madam President, especially at this moment when Ireland is thriving, stronger, more prosperous, and prouder than at any time in its rich history. Modern Ireland has stepped forward as a nation whose goods are traded around the world and whose music, movies, and literature are treasures of global culture. And Ireland is playing an even greater role on the world stage to the benefit of nations everywhere. Indeed, every day for the last 40 years, somewhere in the world an Irish citizen has worked for peace and humanity.

In the North, though the way is not always easy, a lasting and peaceful settlement is closer than at any time in memory, in good measure because Ireland has worked so steadfastly for every chance for peace.

The friendship between the United States is stronger than ever. Indeed, friendship is an inadequate word for the relationship between two nations as intertwined as ours. From the earliest times of our history, the Irish have been at the heart of our striving to be a better nation. By supporting Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, Irish immigrants helped to prod America to improve and broaden the reach of our democracy. They stood unflinchingly for freedom all the way. Two hundred thousand Irish-Americans fought in our Civil War, the most costly part of our journey toward a more perfect Union.

While the Irish made their presence felt in America, we like to believe America's presence was felt in Ireland as well. Ideas about self-government that developed here were carried across the ocean and espoused by leaders like Wolfe Tone, Daniel O'Connell, and Charles Stewart Parnell. The devotion of Irish-Americans to the cause of Irish liberty and their support of the Irish state is renowned here at home and around the world.

Today we celebrate all these ties and others that go to the deepest part of our life and character as a nation. But we cannot imagine America without the Irish-Americans. Whether in business or politics, the arts or entertainment, or making the life of every community in this country a little stronger, they have graced our country in immeasurable ways.

President Robinson, in 1916 Patrick Pearse, the Irish poet and patriot, described Irish-Americans as the, "sea-divided Gael." It was a haunting phrase from a year of bloodshed. Tonight, we see that on both sides of the sea, the Irish are flourishing. The love and joy that unites us is far, far broader and stronger than the sea which divides us.

So ladies, and gentleman, let us all raise a glass to the partnership of Ireland and America, to the extraordinary community of Irish-Americans for which we are so grateful, and to the President of Ireland and her health, well-being, and the future of her beloved country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks Following the Entertainment at the State Dinner *June 13, 1996*

Weren't they wonderful tonight? They made us all so happy. [*Applause*]

I also want to say to President Robinson that she brought America a little of the luck of the Irish. I am pleased to announce to you that while we were here at dinner the long standoff with the freemen in Montana ended peacefully tonight. I want to thank the FBI and the local law enforcement officials and say I am very, very proud of them. I

know I speak for all of our people, when we say we'll all say a little prayer tonight of gratitude for this peaceful resolution of a difficult situation.

Finally, you heard President Robinson say this is an Irish event and it can't end early, so after we break up, the Air Force Airmen of Note will be playing here. We urge you to stay and dance to your heart's content or till the angry neighbors run us off. [*Laughter*] My experience is that will be quite some time. You can make it until dawn. [*Laughter*]

Again, I thank you, Mary Chapin Carpenter; thank you, Mary Black; thank you, gentlemen. It was a wonderful, wonderful evening. And most of all, thank you, President Robinson. Thank you, Nick. It was wonderful for Hillary and me to have you here. Bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to singers Mary Chapin Carpenter and Mary Black. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 6904—Father's Day, 1996

June 13, 1996

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

America owes a debt of gratitude to the fathers that help our Nation's children grow up safe and happy. Providing a wellspring of love for their families to draw upon, these men strengthen our communities and enable their daughters and sons to master life's lessons with confidence. They share with us their experiences and energies, creating the strong foundation on which our children build their lives. A father's arm is there to protect and steer—whether cradling a newborn baby, steadying the rider of a first two-wheeler, or walking his child down the aisle.

Fatherhood provides one of life's most profound joys and one of its most solemn responsibilities. Everyone who has been blessed by a father's love knows the abiding respect it inspires and the self-esteem that can grow from a dad's affectionate guidance.